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1947

PALESTINE

File No. 7622

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E 7322  
14 AUG 1947

PALESTINE

Registry Number E7622/7122/31  
FROM F O Minutes  
No. M Bealey  
Dated 12 Aug  
Received in Registry 19

Brief for U.K. Delegates to General Assembly.  
Enclosed preliminary brief prepared in consultation with Mr. Trafford Smith for the U.K. Delegates to the General Assembly to the Autumn Session.

Last Paper

(Minutes.)

References

E 3486/46/21

(Print)

(How disposed of)

61948

Please see minutes within.

The Colonial Secretary, before he went abroad, also read this draft and made the following comments:-

(a) Account should be taken of the strong feeling now apparent in the country and the House of Commons in favour of British withdrawal from Palestine;

(b) The draft does not explicitly mention immigration. The recommendations to be made by the United Nations Committee and by the General Assembly must be judged to a large extent with reference to the way in which they deal with this question;

(c) Trusteeship must lead somewhere and our attitude towards a proposal for a period of trusteeship would depend to some extent on the goal at which the recommendation seemed to be aiming, e.g. a unitary State or partition;

(d) Maintenance of the prestige of the United Nations should be an important element in the policy of H.M. Government.

L Relations

Mr. Trafford Smith has received other comments from the International Department of the Colonial Office. We have prepared a revised draft, which is now being typed, in a form in which it can be shown to the Secretary of State and communicated to the Chiefs of Staff.

(Action completed) [Signature]  
(Imp) [Signature]

H. Bealey

20th August, 1947.

Next Paper

8126

Separate minutes

M/26 21.8

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Minutes.

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The attached draft, prepared in consultation with Mr. Trafford Smith & the Colonial Office, is a preliminary survey of the ground which must later be covered by the Palestine brief for the U.K. Delegation to the autumn Assembly. The brief itself cannot be written until the U.N. Committee on Palestine has submitted its Report. Meanwhile, however, Eastern Dept. would welcome the views of S.L. and U.N. Depts. on this draft. (It is being given similar circulation in the C.O.)

Servies Liaison Dept.  
U.N. (Political) Dept.

H. Beely 12/8

I have not consulted the Joint Planning Staff, even informally, on this, as I understand that we propose to get an agreed basis with the Colonial Office before taking this any further.

So far as I can see, the draft appears to be all right from the strategic point of view,

subject/

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get a sole (h.k.) trusteeship for  
Cyrenaica: or vice versa: I doubt if  
we should get a sole trusteeship for both.  
We ought also to be clear what, in Palestine,  
in the event of trusteeship it is proposed to  
designate as a strategic area. Article 83  
of the Charter comes in here.

T. Masar  
15.8.

1. Mr. <sup>Johnston</sup> ~~Parry~~ provides strong reasons  
for agreeing to implement position. But:  
(a) whatever happens in the General  
Assembly, H.M. Government will <sup>probably</sup> be  
faced with a strong demand at  
home for the immediate evacuation  
of Palestine; and this demand  
will be difficult to resist in  
proportion to the anticipated difficulty  
of putting the U.N. recommendation  
into effect.

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Reference (to carry out partition)

(b) the Arabs might regard our refusal as an act of weakness, but they would regard our acceptance of the task as complicity in an anti-Arab policy.

2. Our treaty relations with Transjordan <sup>were to</sup> would become important if the Assembly recommend that the Arab part of Palestine be attached to that Kingdom. Article 1 of the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty of 1946 reads in part as follows:

"... there shall be full and frank consultation between them in all matters of foreign policy which affect their common interests." Each of the H.C.P.s. undertakes not to adopt in foreign countries an attitude which ... might create difficulties for the other party...."

3. I agree with Mr. Mason that "international" trusteeship might take either of two quite different forms.

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This condition is unlikely to be fulfilled. But if it were, and a fortiori if the resolution seemed likely to be defeated, the United Kingdom Delegation should probably abstain from voting. Any other course would be difficult to reconcile with the policy of strict impartiality as between Arab and Jew by which we have hitherto been guided in our dealings on Palestine with the United Nations. It would obviously be disastrous to allow the United Nations to establish an independent Arab State against the opposition of H.M.G. Not only would it be impossible in the resulting situation to obtain a treaty securing facilities for British forces in Palestine, but our relations with the existing Arab States would also suffer. Even if the resolution were defeated it would be preferable that the United Kingdom should not have voted against it. On the other hand, a vote in favour of the Arab solution would lead to bitter Zionist accusations of betrayal.

4. Although this solution would envisage the independence of Palestine within the shortest possible space of time, arrangements would have to be made for an orderly transfer of power to the independent Government. This could not be effected without the previous formation of a provisional Government and the drafting of a constitution (presumably by an elected constituent assembly). It follows that even under this plan there must be a period of transition, and H.M.G. would have to decide whether they could accept the task of administering the country during this period. The transfer of power would be resisted from the outset by the Jewish community. On the other hand, the

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Administration could count on the co-operation of the Arabs. This consideration, together with the chance of obtaining a satisfactory treaty with the independent State, might make it on balance advantageous for H.M.G. to undertake the supervision of its establishment.

Partition.

5. It is reported that the majority of the members of the United Nations Committee are at present inclined to favour this solution. Partition is a vague term, covering a wide variety of possible recommendations. But it may be assumed that the Committee will seek to draw a frontier which gives the Jews room for development without, however, meeting their own unreasonable demands. The Arab delegates at the Assembly will undoubtedly oppose any form of partition, while the Jewish Agency, if confronted with a form of partition offering them substantially less than they have claimed, would probably attempt to persuade some Delegation to introduce an amendment accepting partition in principle but demanding a larger area for the Jewish State. Here again, when the attitude of the United Kingdom Delegation is determined, account must be taken of its bearing on future Anglo-Arab relations. It would be particularly unfortunate if the British vote were cast in favour of partition, only for partition to be defeated by the votes of other Delegations. Conversely, if a form of partition acceptable to the Zionists were recommended by the Assembly, a British vote against it would cast a shadow over our relations with the future Jewish State. In view of these risks/

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risks, and of the general requirement of neutrality as between Arab and Jew, there would seem to be a strong case for abstention on this issue in all circumstances.

6. A recommendation in favour of partition would probably involve a longer period of transition than a recommendation in favour of a unitary State. In addition to the drafting of constitutions and the transferring of powers, there would have to be a boundary commission, whose task would be exceedingly complicated and might be prolonged. The attempt to carry partition into effect would almost certainly be the signal for the Arab insurrection which the Mufti and his supporters have been planning for some time past. At the same time, the Jewish terrorists would undoubtedly resist it and would appeal to the Jewish community for more active support than they have hitherto received. This appeal might well meet with a good deal of success, since a "moderate" form of partition would probably fail to satisfy very large elements within the Jewish Agency itself. Thus the period immediately following a decision to partition Palestine would probably be marked by greater bloodshed even than the years of the Arab rising before the war. It seems doubtful whether H.M.G. should undertake the task of giving effect to partition in these circumstances. It might be preferable to announce our readiness to accept the General Assembly's recommendation and to invite the United Nations to provide an alternative Administration for the purpose of carrying their proposals into effect, meanwhile endeavouring to maintain the status/

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status quo in Palestine notwithstanding the extreme difficulty of governing the country in such circumstances. On the other hand, this course would involve the total liquidation of our military position in Palestine (See Annex below).

International trusteeship.

7. It would obviously be difficult for the United Kingdom Delegation to resist a proposal that Palestine should be placed under international administration, whether for a limited period or indefinitely. Much would depend, however, on the character of the administration proposed and on the motives with which the recommendation was made. M. Gromyko's speech at the end of the special session of the Assembly in May gives some ground for supposing that a resolution on these lines may be introduced by the Soviet Delegation or one of its associates, with the primary aim of weakening British influence in the Middle East and providing a cover in Palestine for the exercise of Russian influence in that area. If international trusteeship is proposed in such a way as to make it clear that it camouflages these intentions, we can perhaps count on the United States Delegation to exert its influence against the adoption of this proposal by the General Assembly. (In the last resort, H.M. Government would be in a position to exercise a veto over the terms of trusteeship, by virtue of Article 79 of the Charter; to do so, however, would defeat the object of our reference to the United Nations). The Arab Delegations could probably be relied on to support the opposition to international trusteeship, whatever the motive of its supporters/

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supporters. The attitude of the Zionists in the lobbies is more difficult to foresee. If partition had been defeated, or if the partition proposal under discussion were thoroughly unsatisfactory from their point of view, they might regard international trusteeship as the most promising of the other alternative recommendations. It is difficult to see how the U.K. Delegation could do other than abstain from voting on this issue.

8. An international administration could not be established in Palestine instantaneously. Acceptance of this proposal would therefore involve the agreement of H.M.G. to continue to administer Palestine until the new Government was ready to take over. It should be made clear, however, that British troops and police would be withdrawn simultaneously with the transfer of authority to the international administration.

British trusteeship.

9. It seems unlikely at present that a proposal for continuing British trusteeship will be on the agenda of the Assembly when it opens in September. But if a two-thirds majority could not be obtained for any of the other three solutions, it is not at all improbable that the Assembly would prefer to adopt a resolution in favour of temporary British trusteeship rather than to confess its failure to make any recommendation whatsoever. The Assembly might admit the complexity of the problem and its inability to reach a final conclusion immediately; it might then invite H.M.G. to prepare a trusteeship agreement in accordance with some general directive and to refer the situation to the General Assembly

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once again at the end of a three-year or five-year period. While this would be unsatisfactory in that it would prolong the present uncertainty as to the final settlement in Palestine, it would on the other hand have the advantage of liberating us from the terms of the existing mandate and enabling us to lay down in the trusteeship agreement some clear and coherent line of policy. It would also ensure the maintenance of our strategic interests in the country for a few years and give us a reasonable chance of securing them by treaty afterwards. The proposal for British trusteeship is probably the only one of the four considered in this paper on which the U.K. Delegation should not necessarily abstain from voting. If the accompanying conditions were satisfactory, there would be no reason for the Delegation not to vote for it. If the conditions were unwelcome, they should be resisted, if necessary to the extent of a vote against the resolution.

10. Agreement to give effect to this recommendation would follow automatically from our acceptance of it.

Tactics in the Assembly.

11. Consideration of the votes to be cast by the U.K. Delegation does not exhaust the question of the part they are to play in the deliberations of the General Assembly. It might be argued that, since we have asked for the advice of the United Nations, it would be improper for us to reveal our attitude towards any solution of the problem until their debates were concluded and their recommendations adopted. If, on the other hand, the United Kingdom Delegation knew, or had reason to suppose, that/

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that any resolution under discussion in the Assembly would be unacceptable to H.M.G., it would be unfortunate to preclude them from doing anything to influence the Assembly against it. Similarly, if they were presented with a choice between two proposals, each of which seemed to have a reasonable chance of acceptance and one of which was clearly more desirable than the other from the point of view of British interests, they should presumably be free to influence to the best of their ability the Assembly's choice. The Delegation should probably use its influence behind the scenes rather than by intervention in debate, and it has already been suggested that there might be a case for abstention on a number of important votes; but it is probable, if the experience of the special session is an accurate guide, that the United Kingdom Delegation will be consulted by many other Delegations in the course of the Assembly's proceedings on the subject of Palestine, and they will consequently be in a position to exercise a good deal of influence in unobtrusive ways.

*/Amner*

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ANNEX

Strategic Considerations.

1. Account has been taken, in the above memorandum, of the strategic importance of Palestine for His Majesty's Government. The purpose of the present Annex is to summarise the views previously expressed by the Chiefs of Staff on this aspect of the matter, and to estimate the probable bearing on our strategic interests of each of the four hypothetical solutions of the Palestine problem.
2. In January 1947, the Chiefs of Staff outlined our military requirements in Palestine as follows:
- (a) retention of full military rights for the purpose of organisation of defence;
  - (b) power to locate in Palestine such forces as our defence interests require; this would entail:
    - (i) the use of Haifa and possibly Gaza as as supply port and for operating such naval vessels as may be necessary;
    - (ii) the location of army forces with their administrative organisation within the civil districts of Haifa, Lydda and Gaza, and the sub-districts of Tulkarm, Nazareth and Beisan;
    - (iii) the use of an airfield system in the general area of central Palestine, together with the necessary radar administrative and supply organisations and the right to station our forces in these bases;
  - (c) the retention of complete freedom of movement in Palestine;

(d)/

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(d) suitable conditions for ensuring the free flow of oil to the Mediterranean terminals. The Chiefs of Staff stated that, if it could not obtain these requirements, our ability to defend Palestine - and therefore our whole strategic position in the Middle East - would be gravely prejudiced.

3. The Chiefs of Staff also emphasised, on this and on other occasions, the importance from a strategic point of view of settling the Palestine problem in such a way as not to lose the goodwill of the Arab Governments and peoples.

4. Of the four types of settlement considered in the above memorandum, the first (an independent unitary state) would secure the goodwill of the Arab world and would probably enable us to obtain strategic facilities by means of a Treaty. The effects of the second (partition) are more difficult to estimate. The prospects for a satisfactory Treaty with the Jewish State might be reasonably good if H.M.G. had agreed to supervise the transfer of powers and had succeeded in doing so without irrevocably antagonising the Jews. The new Arab Government on the other hand might be in a more sullen and uncooperative mood, and partition would have an adverse effect on our relations with the independent Arab States. It is to be noticed, however, that if any portion of Palestine was incorporated in Transjordan, we should automatically acquire in that portion of the country the rights accorded to us by our existing Treaty with Transjordan. Under the third solution (international trusteeship), the British military position in Palestine would presumably/

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presumably be liquidated. The fourth solution (British trusteeship) would of course secure our military requirements for the period of trusteeship, and should enable us to make satisfactory arrangements on its termination.

5. From a purely strategic point of view, therefore, the four possibilities may be arranged in the following order of preference:

1. British trusteeship.
2. A unitary independent State,
3. Partition.
4. International trusteeship.

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~~Bernard~~ Frank 22  
BAB 29

These are the  
two Palestine  
memos. They are, of  
course, closely  
affected by the  
publication of the  
UN C-ees recommend-  
ations.

Could show the  
H. back soon as  
they will have to go  
up behind fresh ph.  
R.G.

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PALESTINE

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Attached is a draft paper prepared at the Departmental level, and concurred in at that level by the Colonial Office, analysing the various aspects of the Palestine question which may arise at the Assembly. As we shall not know until shortly before the Assembly meets what solution the U.M.C. Committee recommends, we shall be faced with important decisions at the last moment, unless we clear our minds now on probable alternatives. Moreover there would be great advantages in being able to consult or inform the Dominions, and also the United States, beforehand and so perhaps to obtain their sympathy or support.

2. The Secretary of State may therefore wish to give some consideration in advance to the principal factors involved.

3. The attached analysis is valuable and well reasoned. But it seems to me that there are strong arguments in favour of a more positive decision that H.M.G. should neither retain the Mandate nor assume trusteeship for Palestine for more than a short period longer. The Secretary of State for the Colonies when he read the attached analysis commented that account should be taken of the strong feeling now apparent in the country and the House of Commons in favour of British withdrawal from Palestine.

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4. Possible recommendations by the UNO Committee.

There are four principal alternative solutions which (with many possible variants) the UNO Committee may make.

- (i) An independent and unitary Palestine, possibly on a cantonal basis.
- (ii) Partition.
- (iii) International trusteeship.
- (iv) United Kingdom trusteeship.

5. There is also the possibility that the Assembly may fail to agree upon anything.

6. (i) or (ii) might be accompanied by a recommendation for either international or United Kingdom trusteeship for a limited transitional period.

7. (iii) or (iv) might be accompanied by a limit of duration.

8. H.M.G. have reserved the right to decline to accept either any particular solution or responsibility for carrying it out.

9. It would be undesirable for H.M.G. to oppose a solution voted by the Assembly. But there is no reason why H.M.G. should necessarily accept responsibility for carrying it out.

10. Strategic Considerations.

The Chiefs of Staff would like to retain our present strategic facilities in Palestine. We can of course do so by retaining the Mandate. But if the Assembly recommends a continuation of British administration in Palestine in any form or for any period

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Ordinary Trusteeship, or even of maintaining our present strategic facilities under the Mandate if contrary to expectation the Assembly would agree to a continuation of the Mandate. In neither case could we expect to maintain such facilities for any long period.

13. Nonetheless H.M.G. require advance bases somewhere in the Middle East. Withdrawal from Palestine therefore increases the desirability of alternative bases in Cyrenaica, Kuwait or elsewhere.

14. The Vacuum

British withdrawal from Palestine unless made in favour of an international or some other national trusteeship would, of course, leave a vacuum. It might be followed by disorders or hostilities between Jews and Arabs or by the infiltration of the Soviet Union. These possibilities must be borne in mind.

15. Financial Considerations.

The cost of the Mandate apart from expenditure on the armed forces is met by the Palestine Government. No expense therefore falls on H.M.G. The estimated cost of maintenance of the troops at present in Palestine is £30,000,000 a year. Withdrawal would therefore only mean economies to the extent, if any, by which H.M.G. would reduce their overall armed forces as a result.

16. Advance Indications of the Views of the UNO Committee.

The latest informal indications from

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Geneva are that a majority of the Committee are now coming round to favour a unitary state on a cantonal basis with an interim British trusteeship of say ten years. But this is far from being definite.

17. Attitude of United Kingdom Representative to the Assembly.

It must be remembered that the United Kingdom Representative to the Assembly in September will have to adopt some attitude when the recommendations of the Committee come before the Assembly. They must either support, oppose or abstain. They could also either attempt to influence other delegations or refrain from doing so.

13. Recommendations.

In the light of the above I submit the following recommendations for consideration:

- (a) If the Committee recommends a unitary state the Arabs may agree but the Zionists will probably resist. We should have to decide our attitude in the light of the form of the recommendation and of the degree of opposition to it in various quarters. But it would probably be preferable for H.M.G. to abstain without opposing.
- (b) If the Committee recommends partition our decision must again be taken in the light of the circumstances.

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during the transitional period; and secondly that all members of the Assembly should bind themselves to take stringent measures to prevent all activities within their territory designed to assist immigration into Palestine above the level fixed by the Assembly.

20. If in spite of efforts we make at the Assembly to alter them the Assembly should make recommendations which we feel unable to take any part in carrying out (e.g. for the sake of argument, unlimited Jewish immigration) we should make our position clear at once, saying that we propose to withdraw from Palestine at the earliest possible moment.

21. Effect on our Position in the Middle East.

From a political point of view the action suggested above would be likely to improve our relations with the countries of the Middle East. But since we are unlikely to be able to maintain an adequate strategic base in Egypt, withdrawal from Palestine would put us in an extremely difficult position unless we have one or more alternative bases in the Middle East to which to move. This underlines the urgency and high importance of securing a base in Cyrenaica. Separate papers are being submitted on this question. It is most unfortunate that we have not already established ourselves in Cyrenaica; but we can hardly for that reason burke the issue of Palestine at the Assembly.

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22. The Commonwealth and the United States.

If H.M.G. decide upon action on these lines, it would be desirable to inform the other Commonwealth Governments and also the United States Government at an early date, in the hope that they will brief their delegates to the Assembly to support our attitude. In the case of Commonwealth Governments we might wish to seek prior concurrence in the line proposed.

If the Secretary of State wished to pursue the above, the first step might be discussion with the Secretary of State for the Colonies and perhaps with the Chiefs of Staff, to be followed by reference to the Cabinet.

*Handwritten notes:*  
I had met in March  
Mr. J. J. [unclear]  
will hold meeting  
in week of Sept 21st  
M. Wright

21st August, 1947.

Sir O. Sargent.

From the United Nations aspect I agree whole-heartedly with this excellent paper in the composition of which Mr. Wright was so good as to consult me.

*Handwritten signature:* Malcolm J. [unclear]  
Aug. 22 (1947)

*Handwritten notes:*  
S/S On your return I think you ought to hold a meeting to discuss this question. It will be probably desirable to take it to the Assembly meet'g. Cabinet before the U.N. [unclear] Aug 22

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TOP SECRETPALESTINEThe Autumn Session of the General Assembly

1. This paper is highly speculative. It has been written now in view of the extremely short time that is likely to be available for drafting instructions, on the subject of Palestine, for the United Kingdom delegation to the autumn session of the General Assembly. The United Nations Palestine Committee are required to communicate their report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the 1st September. It is unlikely that they will conclude their task ahead of schedule, and the autumn session is due to begin on the 16th September. Thus, even if the British Liaison Officer succeeds in obtaining a copy of the Report in Geneva before it is circulated through the Secretary-General, there may be an interval of only a few days between the arrival of the Report in London and the departure of the United Kingdom Delegation for New York.

2. It seems unlikely that the Committee will present a unanimous report. Even if this were to happen, the Assembly would not be bound by the Committee's findings, and alternative solutions would probably be submitted for discussion. We must therefore envisage discussions turning on a number of conflicting proposals, in which much may depend on the wholly unforeseeable order in which these are put to the vote. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that all the solutions before the Assembly will fall within one of the four following categories:-

(a) Proposals for the immediate independence of Palestine as a unitary State, involving a predominant position for the Arabs.

(b) Proposals for partition, resulting in the immediate independence of a Jewish State in a part of Palestine, and in the simultaneous creation of an Arab State in other parts of the country or their attachment to one or more neighbouring Arab States.

(c) Proposals for a period of trusteeship under international administration.

(d) Proposals for a period of trusteeship under British administration.

These four types of proposals are considered in the following paragraphs. In each case it is assumed that, once the proposal had been adopted by the necessary two-thirds majority in the Assembly, His Majesty's Government would accept it, in the sense of not standing in the way of its execution. On that assumption, two questions remain for consideration:

- (1) how the United Kingdom Delegation should use its vote in the Assembly; and
- (2) whether His Majesty's Government could agree to act as the instrument for giving effect to the policy.

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3. The answers given below to these two questions must necessarily be provisional at the present stage. When the United Nations Committee has reported, it will be possible to draft a Delegation brief for consideration by Ministers. But this brief cannot take its final form until the Cabinet have reached a decision on the relative weight to be given to two conflicting considerations:

- (i) the feeling in this country, heightened by the present economic crisis, in favour of withdrawing from Palestine;
- (ii) the view of the Chiefs of Staff that the retention of military facilities in Palestine is essential for the maintenance of our position in the Middle East.

4. An independent unitary State.

A proposal of this kind has already been placed on the agenda of the Assembly by the Government of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The Zionists will resist it with all the influence at their disposal. It is most improbable that any resolution on these lines will be adopted, unless it is known that the United States Delegation are at least benevolently neutral. This condition is unlikely to be fulfilled. But if it were, and a fortiori if the resolution seemed likely to be defeated, the United Kingdom Delegation should probably abstain from voting. Any other course would be difficult to reconcile with the policy of strict impartiality as between Arab and Jew by which we have hitherto been guided in our dealings on Palestine with the United Nations. It would obviously be disastrous to allow the United Nations to establish an independent Arab State against the opposition of His Majesty's Government. Not only would it be impossible in the resulting situation to obtain a treaty securing facilities for British forces in Palestine, but our relations with the existing Arab States would also suffer. Even if the resolution were defeated it would be preferable that the United Kingdom should not have voted against it. On the other hand, a vote in favour of the Arab solution would lead to bitter Zionist accusations of betrayal.

5. Although this solution would envisage the independence of Palestine within the shortest possible space of time, arrangements would have to be made for an orderly transfer of power to the independent Government. This could not be effected without the previous formation of a provisional Government and the drafting of a constitution (presumably by an elected constituent assembly). It follows that even under this plan there must be a period of transition, and His Majesty's Government would have to decide whether they could accept the task of administering the country during this period. The transfer of power would be resisted from the outset by the Jewish community. On the other hand, the Administration could count on the co-operation of the Arabs. This consideration, together with the chance of obtaining a satisfactory treaty with the independent State, might make it on balance advantageous for His Majesty's Government to undertake the supervision of its establishment.

Partition.

6. It is reported that the majority of the members of the United Nations Committee are at present inclined to favour this solution. Partition is a vague term, covering a wide variety of possible recommendations. But it may be assumed that the Committee will seek to draw a frontier which gives the Jews room for development without, however, meeting their own unreasonable demands. The Arab delegates at the Assembly will undoubtedly

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oppose any form of partition, while the Jewish Agency, if confronted with a form of partition offering them substantially less than they have claimed, would probably attempt to persuade some Delegation to introduce an amendment accepting partition in principle but demanding a larger area for the Jewish State. Here again, when the attitude of the United Kingdom Delegation is determined, account must be taken of its bearing on future Anglo-Arab relations. It would be particularly unfortunate if the British vote were cast in favour of partition, only for partition to be defeated by the votes of other Delegations. Conversely, if a form of partition acceptable to the Zionists were recommended by the Assembly, a British vote against it would cast a shadow over our relations with the future Jewish State. In view of these risks, and of the general requirement of neutrality as between Arab and Jew, there would seem to be a strong case for abstention on this issue in all circumstances.

7. A recommendation in favour of partition would probably involve a longer period of transition than a recommendation in favour of a unitary State. In addition to the drafting of constitutions and the transferring of powers, there would have to be a boundary commission, whose task would be exceedingly complicated and might be prolonged. The attempt to carry partition into effect would almost certainly be the signal for the Arab insurrection which the Mufti and his supporters have been planning for some time past. At the same time, the Jewish terrorists would undoubtedly resist it and would appeal to the Jewish community for more active support than they have hitherto received. This appeal might well meet with a good deal of success, since a "moderate" form of partition would probably fail to satisfy very large elements within the Jewish Agency itself. Thus the period immediately following a decision to partition Palestine would probably be marked by greater bloodshed even than the years of the Arab rising before the war. It seems doubtful whether His Majesty's Government should undertake the task of giving effect to partition in these circumstances. It might be preferable to announce our readiness to accept the General Assembly's recommendation and to invite the United Nations to provide an alternative Administration for the purpose of carrying their proposals into effect, meanwhile endeavouring to maintain the status quo in Palestine notwithstanding the extreme difficulty of governing the country in such circumstances. On the other hand, this course would involve the total liquidation of our military position in Palestine (See Annex below).

International trusteeship.

8. It would obviously be difficult for the United Kingdom Delegation to resist a proposal that Palestine should be placed under international administration, whether for a limited period or indefinitely. Much would depend, however, on the character of the administration proposed and on the motives with which the recommendation was made. The Charter provides for two forms of trusteeship other than administration by a single State. These are direct administration by the United Nations and administration by a group of two or more States. The latter alternative may itself be subdivided, not for legal but for political purposes, into administration by a group of Great Powers and administration by a group of small States. Monsieur

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Gromyko's speech at the end of the special session of the Assembly in May gives some ground for supposing that a resolution in favour of a temporary trusteeship under either the United Nations or the Great Powers may be introduced by the Soviet Delegation or one of its associates, with the primary aim of weakening British influence in the Middle East and providing a cover in Palestine for the exercise of Russian influence in that area. If international trusteeship is proposed in such a way as to make it clear that it camouflages these intentions, we can perhaps count on the United States Delegation to exert its influence against the adoption of this proposal by the General Assembly. (In the last resort, His Majesty's Government would be in a position to exercise a veto over the terms of trusteeship, by virtue of Article 79 of the Charter; to do so, however, would defeat the object of our reference to the United Nations). The Arab Delegations could probably be relied on to support the opposition to international trusteeship, whatever the motive of its supporters. The attitude of the Zionists in the lobbies is more difficult to foresee. If partition had been defeated, or if the partition proposal under discussion were thoroughly unsatisfactory from their point of view, they might regard international trusteeship as the most promising of the other alternative recommendations. It is difficult to see how the United Kingdom Delegation could do other than abstain from voting on this issue.

9. An international administration could not be established in Palestine instantaneously. Acceptance of this proposal would therefore involve the agreement of His Majesty's Government to continue to administer Palestine until the new Government was ready to take over. It should be made clear, however, that British troops and police would be withdrawn simultaneously with the transfer of authority to the international administration.

British trusteeship.

10. It seems unlikely at present that a proposal for continuing British trusteeship will be on the agenda of the Assembly when it opens in September. But if a two-thirds majority could not be obtained for any of the other three solutions, it is not at all improbable that the Assembly would prefer to adopt a resolution in favour of temporary British trusteeship rather than to confess its failure to make any recommendation whatsoever. The Assembly might admit the complexity of the problem and its inability to reach a final conclusion immediately; it might then invite His Majesty's Government to prepare a trusteeship agreement in accordance with some general directive and to refer the situation to the General Assembly once again at the end of a three-year or five-year period. While this would be unsatisfactory in that it would prolong the present uncertainty as to the final settlement in Palestine, it would on the other hand have the advantage of liberating us from the terms of the existing mandate and enabling us to lay down in the trusteeship agreement some clear and coherent line of policy. It would also ensure the maintenance of our strategic interests in the country for a few years and give us a reasonable chance of securing them by treaty afterwards. The proposal for British trusteeship is probably the only one of the four considered in this paper on which the United Kingdom Delegation should not in all circumstances abstain from voting. If the accompanying conditions were satisfactory, abstention would probably be the best course. But if the conditions were unwelcome, they should be resisted, if necessary to the extent of a vote against the resolution. It is probable that the Assembly's recommendation would include some stipulation on the question of Jewish immigration, and the nature of this would be especially important.

11. Agreement to give effect to this recommendation would follow automatically from our acceptance of it.

Tactics/

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Tactics in the Assembly.

12. Consideration of the votes to be cast<sup>c/</sup> by the United Kingdom Delegation does not exhaust the question of the part they are to play in the deliberations of the General Assembly. It might be argued that, since we have asked for the advice of the United Nations, it would be improper for us to reveal our attitude towards any solution of the problem until their debates were concluded and their recommendations adopted. If, on the other hand, the United Kingdom Delegation knew, or had reason to suppose, that any resolution under discussion in the Assembly would be unacceptable to His Majesty's Government, it would be unfortunate to preclude them from doing anything to influence the Assembly against it. Similarly, if they were presented with a choice between two proposals, each of which seemed to have a reasonable chance of acceptance and one of which was clearly more desirable than the other from the point of view of British interests, they should presumably be free to influence to the best of their ability the Assembly's choice. The Delegation should probably use its influence behind the scenes rather than by intervention in debate, and it has already been suggested that there might be a case for abstention on a number of important votes; but it is probable, if the experience of the special session is an accurate guide, that the United Kingdom Delegation will be consulted by many other Delegations in the course of the Assembly's proceedings on the subject of Palestine, and they will consequently be in a position to exercise a good deal of influence in unobtrusive ways.

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ANNEXStrategic Considerations.

1. Account has been taken, in the above memorandum, of the strategic importance of Palestine for His Majesty's Government. The purpose of the present Annex is to summarise the views previously expressed by the Chiefs of Staff on this aspect of the matter, and to estimate the probable bearing on our strategic interests of each of the four hypothetical solutions of the Palestine problem.

2. In January 1947, the Chiefs of Staff outlined our military requirements in Palestine as follows:-

- (a) retention of full military rights for the purpose of organisation of defence;
- (b) power to locate in Palestine such forces as our defence interests require; this would entail:
  - (i) the use of Haifa and possibly Gaza as a supply port and for operating such naval vessels as may be necessary;
  - (ii) the location of army forces with their administrative organisation within the civil districts of Haifa, Lydda and Gaza, and the sub-districts of Tulkarm, Nazareth and Beisan;
  - (iii) the use of an airfield system in the general area of central Palestine, together with the necessary radar administrative and supply organisations and the right to station our forces in these bases;
- (c) the retention of complete freedom of movement in Palestine;
- (d) suitable conditions for ensuring the free flow of oil to the Mediterranean terminals.

The Chiefs of Staff stated that, if it could not obtain these requirements, our ability to defend Palestine - and therefore our whole strategic position in the Middle East - would be gravely prejudiced.

3. The Chiefs of Staff also emphasised, on this and on other occasions, the importance from a strategic point of view of settling the Palestine problem in such a way as not to lose the goodwill of the Arab Governments and peoples.

4. Of the four types of settlement considered in the above memorandum, the first (an independent unitary state) would secure the goodwill of the Arab world and would probably enable us to obtain strategic facilities by means of a Treaty. The effects of the second (partition) are more difficult to estimate. The prospects for a satisfactory Treaty with the Jewish State might be reasonably good if His Majesty's Government had agreed to supervise the transfer of powers and had succeeded in doing so without irrevocably antagonising the Jews. The new Arab Government on the other hand might be in a more sullen and uncooperative mood, and partition would have an adverse effect on our relations with the independent Arab States. It is to be noticed, however, that if any portion of Palestine was incorporated in Transjordan, we should automatically acquire in that portion of the country the rights accorded to us by our existing Treaty with Transjordan. Under the third solution (international trusteeship), the British military position in Palestine would presumably be liquidated. The fourth solution (British trusteeship) would of course secure our military

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requirements for the period of trusteeship, and should enable us to make satisfactory arrangements on its termination.

5. From a purely strategic point of view, therefore, the four possibilities may be arranged in the following order of preference:

- 1. British trusteeship.
- 2. A unitary independent State.
- 3. Partition.
- 4. International trusteeship.

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INDEXED

O U T W A R D T E L E G R A M

This is an unparaphrased version of a Secret cypher (typex) message and the text must first be paraphrased if it is essential to communicate it to persons outside British and United States Government Services.

F.2781/39  
CYPHER (TYPEX)

O.D.

FROM: COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE

TO: AUSTRALIA (H.C.)

(Sent 5.00p.m. 28th Aug., 1947)

IMPORTANT

No. 569 SECRET

Following for Kimber from Twist reference your telegram No. 646. No decisions have yet been taken by His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom on policy to be pursued in relation to Palestine after United Nations have made recommendations on future of that country. Most that can be said is:-

- (a) We should naturally be reluctant to reject any recommendation;
- (b) we are not (repeat not) committed to acceptance of Assembly recommendations;
- (c) we have drawn distinction between acceptance of recommendation in sense of not standing in way of its application, and acceptance of task of applying it. We have thus envisaged a situation in which it might be necessary to respond to Assembly's recommendation by saying that we should not (repeat not) obstruct it but that we could not (repeat not) ourselves undertake to give effect to it.

2. On points put by Department of External Affairs following are some of factors which will need to be taken into account when time comes.

Question 1.

There is a strong feeling in many quarters in this country in favour of leaving Palestine, which is enhanced by present economic situation. Nevertheless, if United Nations recommended withdrawal, our attitude would necessarily depend on nature of succeeding administration and on our assessment of resulting strategic situation in Middle East area.

Question 2.

Strategic implications are clearly of high importance and would need to be studied by Chiefs-of-Staff in light of assessment of world situation at the time. D.E.A. will realize that this question is hardly susceptible of an informal answer in present context.

Question 3.

United Kingdom Delegation will look forward to close  
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E 9685

17 OCT

PALESTINE

Registry Number

E 9685/7622/4

FROM

Mr Bealey

No.

New York.

Dated

to Mr Gorman

Received in Registry

11 Oct  
17 -

Reaction to American Proclamations.  
Encloses copy of minute containing first reactions to American proclamations, also earlier minute based on Cabinet paper and decision of Sept 20. Asks for comments on either.

Last Paper

8126

(Minutes.)

See E 10020 and action

Mr Bealey  
Oct. 29

References

(Print)

(How disposed of)

(Action completed)

J S M 4/11

(Index)

[Handwritten signature]

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negotiate directly with the Arab States. This would be only logical, since the impotence of our policy in Palestine has been due to the contrary pressures upon us from the Arab States and from the United States. When we withdraw, the pressures should meet, a contact which would suit us well enough, I think.

Yours ever,

*Harold.*

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THE PALESTINE COMMITTEE.

The Americans have now declared themselves and we can foresee more clearly the probable development of the Committee's discussion. It is likely that the United Kingdom Delegation will soon be called upon:

- (a) to vote on proposals of the kind foreshadowed in the American statement;
- (b) to state whether His Majesty's Government will participate in implementing these proposals.

2. So far as the vote is concerned, there was general agreement before we left London that the Delegation should abstain from voting on any substantive proposal for the future of Palestine, except in the case of a proposal which involved British participation and in the enforcement of which His Majesty's Government would not in fact agree to participate. In this case the Delegation should cast a negative vote.

3. The more difficult problem is that of defining the conditions in which His Majesty's Government would decline to participate in implementing a recommendation, and in which the Delegation would therefore vote against it. The separate minute attached summarises the conclusions on this point which are implied in the Cabinet decision of the 20th December. What they amount to is:

- (a) that the Delegation should oppose a resolution involving United Kingdom participation in the U.N.S.C.O.P. majority plan as it now stands;
- (b) that there is no clear ruling on any other possibility.

If the problem arises in any form other than that envisaged under (a) above, it will presumably be necessary to refer to London for instructions. It may however be useful to submit the following comments on the American statement.

4. Despite the concession of Jaffa and the <sup>promise</sup> ~~problem~~ of other territorial changes which might be of advantage to the Arab State, the American proposals are considered by the Arab Delegations to be even more objectionable than the original plan ~~of~~ the U.N.S.C.O.P. majority. They take this view because the American statement (paragraph 6) appears to propose "equal economic opportunity" for all the inhabitants of Palestine in both States after partition. The Arab State would thus be prevented from maintaining, even on its own territory, the present regulations limiting the transfer of land to Jews, and would be unable to resist other <sup>forms</sup> ~~persons~~ of Zionist economic <sup>penetration</sup> ~~partition~~. The U.N.S.C.O.P. majority,

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they say, promised the Jews political sovereignty over a large part of the country, the Americans are now offering them economic domination in the remainder.

5. This argument has an important bearing on the interests of His Majesty's Government. The conclusion of the Cabinet in favour of declining participation in the U.N.S.C.O.P. majority plan was reached <sup>on account</sup> ~~in the light~~ of the effect which such participation would have on the relations of His Majesty's Government with the independent Arab Governments. It would not be consistent with this conclusion to <sup>accept</sup> ~~occupy~~ a share in executing the American proposals.

6. But it seems that something more than participation is now proposed. The American statement observes ( paragraph 7) "that the General Assembly did not, by admitting this item to its agenda, undertake to assume responsibility for the administration of Palestine during the process of transition to independence" It endorses the U.N.S.C.O.P. majority plan without suggesting the amendment of that part of it which provides for continuing British responsibility during the period of transition. It contains no hint of any alternative Administration. And the participation which is offered by the United States Government, in a United Nations effort to meet "economic and financial problems and the problem of internal law and order", is intended "to assist the parties involved" (paragraph 9). The conclusion seems unavoidable that the "parties involved" include His Majesty's Government, and that what is being proposed is an international arrangement to provide financial assistance and a volunteer police force to aid His Majesty's Government in discharging for two more years the responsibility of administering Palestine.

7. If this is an accurate interpretation of the United States statement, they would appear to have entirely misunderstood the word "participation" as it was used in the Colonial Secretary's opening speech. On this ground above all, and in view of the argument advanced in paragraphs 4 and 5 above, there can be little doubt that the Cabinet would reject the American plan as altogether unacceptable.

8. I therefore suggest that we should seek authority:

- (a) to explain, if and when a resolution is presented to the Committee in accordance with the United States statement, our reason for finding it unacceptable,
- and (b) to cast a vote against it

(H. Beeley)

12th October, 1947.

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Minister of State

Palestine

As you pointed out at this morning's Delegation meeting, we are likely to be asked before long whether there is any settlement in Palestine which His Majesty's Government would participate in enforcing. I think it may be useful to summarise our present position on this question.

2. The Cabinet, at its meeting on the 20th September, took two decisions:

- (a) endorsing the draft of the Colonial Secretary's speech; and
- (b) giving general approval to the memorandum which had been presented by the Foreign Secretary.

3. The Foreign Secretary's memorandum argued that His Majesty's Government should neither accept the entire responsibility for implementing UNSCOP's majority plan nor agree to participate in implementing it. The principal reason for this latter recommendation was that British participation would be almost as harmful in its effect on Anglo-Arab relations as would the acceptance of sole responsibility. It was also pointed out in the memorandum that no revision of the majority plan would make it acceptable to the Arabs unless the changes were so great as to make it unacceptable to the Jews. As for the minority plan, the Foreign Secretary expressed the opinion that this would be resisted by the Jews. The memorandum did not contain any recommendation on British participation in imposing on Palestine either a modified form of partition or the proposal of the UNSCOP minority.

4. The Cabinet's decision therefore appears to exclude the possibility of British participation in enforcement of the majority plan as it now stands. The argument advanced by the Foreign Secretary against this course may be held to apply also to other forms of partition and, mutatis mutandis, to the minority plan. But on these points we have as yet no ruling.

5. I am giving a copy of this minute to the Colonial Secretary.

(signed: W. Bealey) 8/10

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SECRET.

THE PALESTINE COMMITTEE.

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- (a) to vote on proposals of the kind foreshadowed in the American statement;
- (b) to state whether His Majesty's Government will participate in implementing these proposals.

2. So far as the vote is concerned, there was general agreement before we left London that the Delegation should abstain from voting on any substantive proposal for the future of Palestine, except in the case of a proposal which involved British participation and in the enforcement of which His Majesty's Government would not in fact agree to participate. In this case the Delegation should cast a negative vote.

3. The more difficult problem is that of defining the conditions in which His Majesty's Government would decline to participate in implementing a recommendation, and in which the Delegation would, therefore, vote against it. The separate minute attached summarises the conclusions on this point which are implied in the Cabinet decision of the 20th December. What they amount to is:

- (a) that the Delegation should oppose a resolution involving United Kingdom participation in the UNSCOP majority plan as it now stands;
- (b) that there is no clear ruling on any other possibility.

If the problem arises in any form other than that envisaged under (a) above it will presumably be necessary to refer to London for instructions. It may however be useful to submit the following comments on the American statement.

4. Despite the concession of Jaffa and the promise of other territorial changes which might be of advantage to the Arab State, the American proposals are considered by the Arab Delegations to be even more objectionable than the original plan of the UNSCOP majority. They take this view because the American statement (paragraph 6) appears to propose "equal economic opportunity" for all the inhabitants of Palestine in both States after partition. The Arab State would thus be prevented from maintaining, even on its own territory, the present regulations limiting the transfer of land to Jews, and would be unable to resist other forms of Zionist economic penetration. The UNSCOP majority, they say, promised the Jews political sovereignty over a large part of the country; the Americans are now offering them economic domination in the remainder.

5. This argument has an important bearing on the interests of His Majesty's Government. The conclusion of the Cabinet in favour of declining participation in the UNSCOP majority plan was reached on account of the effect which such participation would have on the relations of His Majesty's Government with the independent Arab Governments. It would not be consistent with this conclusion to accept a share in executing the American proposals.

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and

(b) to cast a vote against it.

(H. Bealey)

12th October, 1947.

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Minister of State.

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Palestine.

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4. The Cabinet's decision therefore appears to exclude the possibility of British participation in enforcement of the majority plan as it now stands. The argument advanced by the Foreign Secretary against this course may be held to apply also to other forms of partition and, mutatis mutandis, to the minority plan. But on these points we have as yet no ruling.

5. I am giving a copy of this minute to the Colonial Secretary.

(H.Beeley)

8th October, 1947.

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